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swers
to some
basic
questions
about OAIP

OAIP

Ontario
Assessment
Instrument
Pool

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What is the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool?

The Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool (OAIP) is a resource from the Ministry of Education consisting of a large pool of questions in a number of subject areas. It is available to persons who are responsible for evaluating student performance and school programs in the elementary and secondary schools of Ontario.

Why has it been produced?

OAIP was produced in response to public and professional need for improved techniques and strategies for evaluating student achievement and the effectiveness of programs. A recommendation, in 1977, by the Minister's Work Group on Evaluation and Reporting set the stage for the work that followed. The group recommended the development of "a bank of specific objectives and corresponding test items based on curriculum objectives that would be available to teachers for their use in the diagnostic testing of students" (Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Report to the Minister of Education, the Hon. Thomas L. Wells, of the Work Group on Evaluation and Reporting*, April 1977, p. 16).

Who developed the material?

Classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, and experts in testing developed the instruments jointly and then refined them to ensure their practicality in the classroom as well as their quality as assessment tools. In each subject area, a group of educators, known as a Subject Advisory Group, has been responsible for seeing that the assessment instruments reflect the intent of the provincial curriculum guidelines.

Where did the name OAIP originate?

Each word in the name is significant. All materials in the pool correspond to the objectives and content of Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines. The term *assessment* implies analysing the information used for evaluation. *Instrument* is used to describe a variety of questions and techniques, such as multiple-choice or open-ended items, which measure a student's proficiency in the skills and competencies outlined in the curriculum guidelines. The collection of instruments in each subject area is called a *pool* because of the large number available to users.

What kinds of questions are in the pool?

Questions in each of the subject pools relate to the ministry curriculum guidelines. They are presented in a variety of forms, including multiple-choice, matching, completion, ranking, and open-ended questions. This variety allows users to evaluate all the major skills in relation to the wide range of objectives outlined in the curriculum guidelines.

How can OAIP be used to assess student performance?

Assessment instruments in each of the subject pools can be used by teachers to assess student performance. This can be done on an individual basis, in groups, or with the entire class. In subject areas where performance data is available on a province-wide basis, such as in Intermediate Division English and mathematics, classroom teachers can compare their students' results with the provincial scores. For example, in the mathematics pool, the following question is one of several instruments used to test addition of decimals: $0.6 + 0.08 + 0.24 = \underline{\hspace{1cm}}$. As a result of testing a representative sample of students across the province, it has been determined that 76 per cent of students in Grade 8 can answer this question correctly. With this information at hand, teachers will be able to compare the level of achievement attained by their students with the provincial level.

How can OAIP be used to evaluate a program?

Teachers might use OAIP to obtain pre-instruction and post-instruction scores for each topic or skill within a program. This would permit them to assess the learning or progress that has taken place and hence the effectiveness of the program.

The Ministry of Education can use OAIP on a sample-survey basis to evaluate programs and policies and to modify them as needed. If, for example, it is found that performance on a particular objective is poor across the province, the ministry will be able to seek more information, to re-examine the objective, and possibly to revise it or remove it from the guideline.

School boards can use OAIP in a similar manner to evaluate their programs. If a board finds that performance on a particular objective is poor, it can use OAIP to compare local scores with

provincial scores and thus determine whether the problem is a province-wide phenomenon or one peculiar to the board or to a local school.

What subject areas are included in OAIP?

The following subject areas are included in OAIP.

For English-language schools and classes:

chemistry (Grades 11-13)

English (Grades 7-10)

French as a second language (Grades 6 and 10)

geography (Grades 7-10)

history (Grades 7-10)

mathematics (Grades 4-6; Grades 7-10)

physics (Grades 11-13)

For French-language schools and classes:

anglais (Grades 4-10)

chimie (Grades 11-13)

français (Grades 4-10)

géographie (Grades 7-10)

histoire (Grades 7-10)

mathématique (Grades 7-10)

physique (Grades 11-13)

How can OAIP materials be obtained?

The OAIP subject pools are distributed free of charge to Ontario school boards for delivery to all publicly supported schools. Teachers and other educators have ready access to any pool at any time for use in assessing school programs or student progress, or for any other instructional purpose.

Copies of OAIP materials may be purchased from:

The Ontario Government Bookstore
800 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N8

The Ontario Institute for
Studies in Education
Publications Sales
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1V6